

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 04 2025

RE: H.B. No. 596
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred H.B. No. 596, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to clarify the types of events that constitute disasters and emergencies for purposes of emergency management.

Your Committee received written comments in support of this measure from the Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition, Climate Protectors Hawaii, Sierra Club of Hawaii, Kupuna for the Moopuna, Free Access Coalition, E Ola Kakou Hawaii, and numerous individuals.

Your Committee received written comments in opposition to this measure from the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency and City and County of Honolulu Department of Emergency Management.

Your Committee finds that clarifying the definitions of disasters and emergencies for purposes of emergency management will improve the State's emergency response efforts by reducing ambiguities, ensuring that the definitions align with best practices and federal guidelines, and allowing emergency



management service agencies to act quickly to protect public health and critical infrastructure.

Your Committee notes that the Department of Defense has expressed concern that the measure's specificity will restrict the capacity of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to respond effectively to unforeseen events. The Department believes that the original statutory language allows for greater flexibility, enabling the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to address a wider array of potential disasters, emergencies, and threats, and ensures that those with executive powers have the capacity to take prompt action when necessary.

Your Committee has amended this measure by changing the effective date to July 1, 2050, to facilitate further discussion on the measure.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 596, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 596, H.D. 1, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,



DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, Chair



